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LETTER

TO

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE,

UPON A

UNION OF THE COLONIES

OF

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

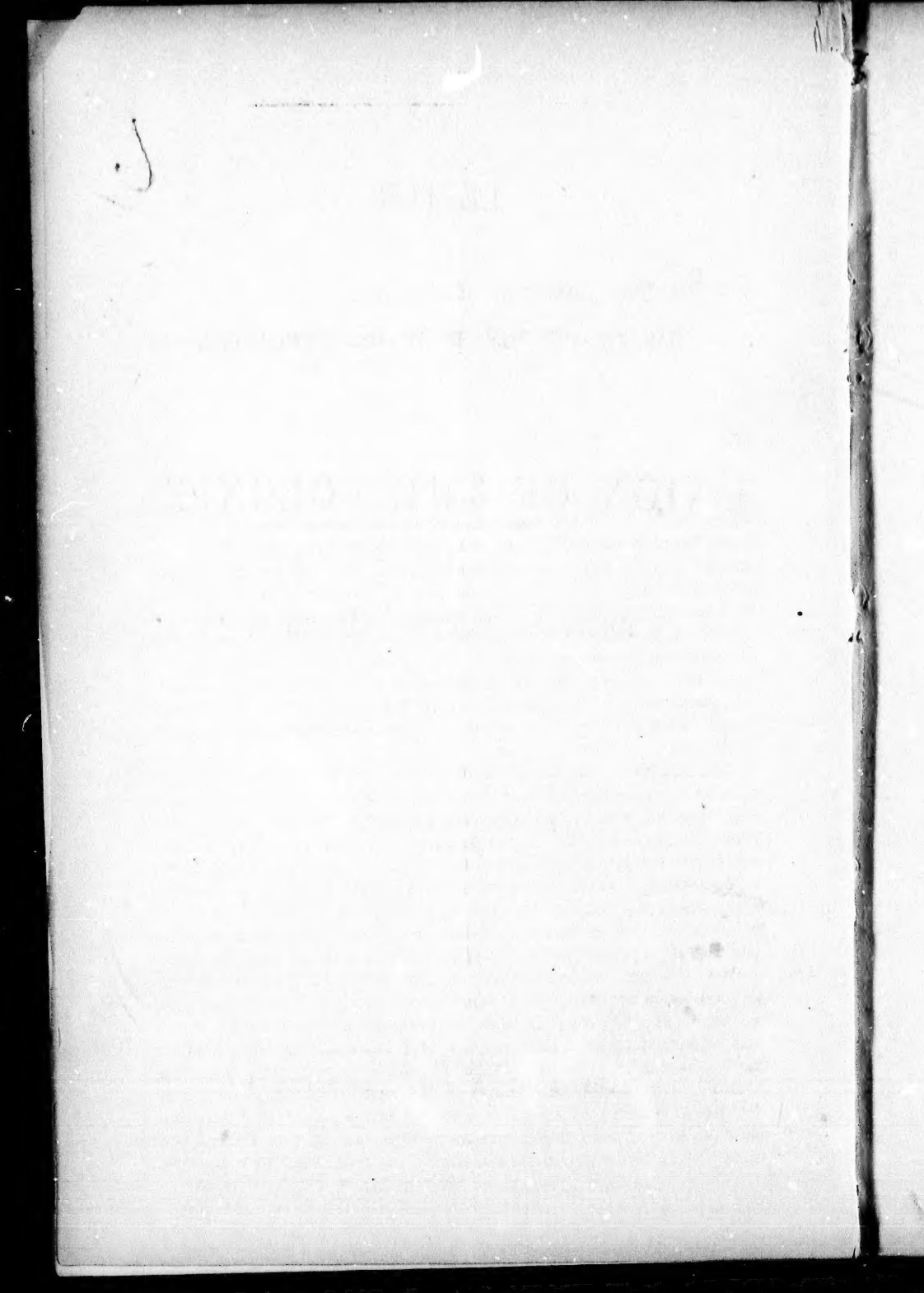
By P. S. HAMILTON.



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1880.



To His Grace the Duke of Newcastle,

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies,
&c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR GRACE :

THE undersigned—author of a pamphlet entitled “Observations upon a Union of the Colonies of British North America,” published in 1855—at the suggestion of several public men, in Canada, New Brunswick, and Novascotia, who share in his opinions; who are, as they believe, intimately acquainted with the popular feeling upon political subjects throughout those Provinces; and who think that the visit of Your Grace to British North America affords an opportunity, which it would be wrong to neglect, of addressing Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies upon that subject—begs leave to submit to the consideration of Your Grace the following observations relative to a scheme for the Union of the British North American Provinces under a single Government and a single Parliament.

The scheme is one which doubtless has not now for the first time been brought to the notice of Your Grace. It is believed that nearly every man of eminent abilities, who has within the last half century given especial attention to the political *status* and prospects of British North America, has been favorable to that union, and has looked forward hopefully to its accomplishment, as the foundation upon which the grandeur of the British dominions would be perpetuated on this continent. When His Royal Highness, the late Duke of Kent, was a resident of these Colonies, one of the many modes by which he testified his earnest desire for their prosperity, and his ready appreciation of what would best conduce to that end, was the hearty approval he gave to a scheme for their Union which was submitted to his consideration; and it would be most gratifying to those who have this project so much at heart, and would, if possible, increase the attachment of the British American people to the Royal Family of Great Britain, if the visit of the Son and Heir of our Queen, whom we now welcome to our shores, and whom Your Grace accompanies, should be associated with the first

steps of a movement which would be really successful in consolidating the now comparatively weak and disconnected North American Provinces into a compact Viceroyalty, forming the nucleus of, it may be hoped, a powerful British American Empire.

It may be within the recollection of Your Grace that a Union of *all* the Provinces was recommended to the Imperial Government by the late Earl of Durham, when Governor-General. Subsequently, and at comparatively recent periods, resolutions in favor of the Union were laid before the Legislatures of Canada and Nova-scotia, and discussed at some length. Although in neither instance were these resolutions put to vote, many of the prominent men of the bodies referred to expressed themselves warmly in favor of the proposed change, whilst no active opposition towards it was evinced from any quarter.

In the summer of 1857, the Executive Government of Nova-scotia despatched to England a delegation, consisting of the Hon. James W. Johnston and Adams G. Archibald, Esquire, to confer with the Imperial Government, among other things, upon a Union of these Provinces. This subject was freely discussed by them with Mr. Labouchere, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Mr. Labouchere was understood by the delegates to intimate that Her Majesty's Government felt disposed to leave the question entirely in the hands of the Colonists themselves; and that it would oppose no obstacle to the accomplishment of the Union. No plan, however, was proposed for carrying out that object, nor did anything transpire which evinced a readiness of the Imperial Government to take active steps towards its accomplishment.

In the following year the Governor-General, Sir Edmund Head, in his speech to the Canadian Parliament, at the close of the session of that year, signified the desirability of effecting a Union with the other Provinces. The Executive Government of Canada, a short time afterwards, resolved upon asking the Colonial Secretary to authorise a meeting of delegates from each of the Colonies to consider that subject. The observations of Sir E. B. Lytton upon the speech of the Governor-General, and his reply to the three Canadian delegates to England, Hon. Messrs. George E. Cartier, John Ross, and A. T. Galt, who, on the 25th October, 1858, specially addressed him, in accordance with the resolution of the Canadian Government, were adverse to the holding of any such meeting of delegates. Sir E. B. Lytton was pleased to describe the question of Union as "necessarily one of Imperial character;" but declined to authorise the meeting of delegates to discuss that question, because, with the exception of one—Nova-scotia, it is presumed—the Imperial Government had received no expression of the sentiments of the Lower Provinces upon the subject.

This, we believe, is the position in which the question has been left, so far as the action of the Imperial or Colonial Governments are to be considered. The inferences to be actually drawn from the expressions of Mr. Labouchere and Sir E. B. Lytton, relative to this matter, are, that until the Colonies *all insist* upon the Union, Her Majesty's Government will not feel disposed to take any action in the matter; but that then it will be actively dealt with as one "of Imperial character." The writer of this communication believes, and it is the opinion of all whom he has heard express an opinion on the subject, that it would be wise, and not unjust, for the Imperial Government not only to take a part, but to take a leading part, in the earlier actual steps for the consummation of the Colonial Union. Some of the reasons for entertaining this opinion will be given hereafter. In the meantime we shall endeavor, very briefly, to furnish Your Grace with a few of the reasons why this Union of the North American Colonies is thought desirable, and why it has taken so firm a hold upon the minds of the British North American people.

The British North American people, like those of the Mother Country, are an enterprising and ambitious race. Collectively, and, as a general rule, individually, they are ambitious. From this arises a craving for nationality, and a feverish dissatisfaction with the existing state of things, which are not easily defined, but which are very widely spread. The British American people, although they are strongly attached to the Sovereign who rules over them, and to the land of their forefathers, have a liberal Constitution, have free institutions, and are exempt from many of the burdens which weigh upon most of other enlightened communities, nevertheless are not content with their political position. The reason is, that position is an anomalous one, and furnishes a constant restraint upon their aspirations. British America, as such, has no political *status* in the view of nations. In looking abroad her inhabitants see countries and peoples comparatively insignificant in extent and numbers, and inferior to British America in everything except a distinct nationality, occupying a respected place in the commonwealth of nations. The inhabitants of such countries are treated with a consideration to which the British Americans, wherever they go, are strangers. It is because the former have a known, well-defined, national position; whilst the latter have not. The unpleasant feelings thus caused are more keenly experienced from the fact of these Colonies bordering upon the United States. We there find a people belonging to the same race, and speaking the same language as ourselves, who form one of the first class nations of the world. The citizens of that great Republic have not failed, whenever opportunity has occurred, to flaunt their brightest honors be-

fore our eyes, and to remind us of the inferior political standing which we, as a particular people, occupy in comparison with themselves. Their motives in doing so may not be difficult to divine; but there is sufficient foundation for such comparisons to make them especially odious to the Colonists. The people of the Colonies feel that such a state of things need not continue. It is true that it is inseparable from the present disconnected condition of the Colonies; but when it is taken into consideration that these Colonies, taken collectively, now number a population of nearly four millions,—that they boast of a mercantile marine inferior only to those of Great Britain and the United States,—that their territory is greater than any other upon this continent except Brazil, and is quite as rich as that Empire in the resources requisite for sustaining population—it is but reasonable that they should feel dissatisfied with conditions in consequence of which, notwithstanding all this, they still remain in a state of political nonentity relative to the outside world. For were these Colonies united so as to become one consolidated Viceroyalty, the bare fact of that union taking place would immediately give British North America a high *status* among nations. She would be looked upon and respected as a *quasi* independent power of a high order; whilst her connection with the Mother Country would not, in any degree, be weakened.

The repressive effect of the present condition of the Colonies upon all ambitious *individual* effort, within their limits, is perhaps still more widely and keenly felt. Owing to the very limited sphere which each separate Colony affords for such effort, the prospect of achieving honors and distinctions in any of what are called the *professions*, is disheartening in the extreme. Each Province has but few prizes, either in the shape of titles, or more substantial honors, to offer as the reward of successful talent, either to the professional politician, or to the man who follows any other avocation; and those few are so insignificant as to present but few attractions to men of superior intellect and lofty aspirations. We are proud to know that some British American Colonists have achieved distinction in the British Army and Navy; but it is to be feared that a long period must elapse before very many of our young men can employ themselves in that sphere, because it is too expensive for most Colonial fortunes, and because when a Colonist enters the British Army, or Navy, he may almost be said to expatriate himself for life. As for the other paths by which the men of Great Britain reach distinction and are rewarded with honors, they are practically closed against the Colonist.

Here again the contiguity of the Colonies to the United States suggests disagreeable comparisons. In that great Republic, the scope for individual exertion is immense; and although the rewards

of success in the higher walks of life are not generally so great as under most monarchical Governments, some of the "prizes open to all," in that country, are of a very high order. Many a British North American has seen individuals upon the United States side of our boundary, whom he knew from personal acquaintance to be inferior to him in natural abilities, education, wealth, and social standing, raised in a short time to the Presidency of that Republic, a position which would entitle him to rank with the proudest monarchs of Europe. At the same time, that British American could not reasonably aspire even to become the Governor of his native Province; and if he were to go to England, all the influence which he could command would probably not procure him a presentation to his Sovereign.

It is presumed that no argument can be necessary to prove to Your Grace that a Union of these Colonies would create a sphere sufficiently large for the exertions of the most active and aspiring of their inhabitants, and necessarily provide rewards commensurate with their exertions. In doing that, it would satisfy a want which is believed to be now deeply felt. It would do more.—The reasons presented above for a Union of the Provinces are, for the most part, such as have suggested themselves only to the more thoughtful and educated members of the community. It is not pretended that all of the masses, and of the petty, local politicians, are influenced by such views. The present aspect of political affairs, however, within each of the Provinces, wherein the influence of the classes just named makes itself largely felt, furnishes strong additional reasons for the change which is now recommended to the notice of Your Grace. It is obvious that a large sphere of action has ever a strong tendency to enlarge and liberalize the views of the actor; whilst a small sphere, comprising only unimportant interests, tends to the very opposite result. This is most especially the case in politics. It need scarcely be observed, as it is so notorious, that even in independent countries having representative institutions as we have, the views of public men, as a general rule, become narrowed, and faction more rampant, in proportion as we find the arena on which they operate more circumscribed. This rule applies with still greater force to the North American Colonies. The people of an independent country, however narrow its limits, have still national questions to discuss, and national interests to preserve, or to contend with. These Colonies have not. Each of them has all the machinery of Government requisite for managing the affairs of an empire; yet, in the case at least of the smaller Colonies, the operation of this machinery is confined to objects and interests of not *very* much greater magnitude than those which come under the control of some English parishes. Under such circumstances, it is not to

be wondered at that factionism and extremely violent faction disputes, should prevail, to the prejudice of the more important public interests. Such is found to be the fact; and it will be found that dissensions between what are called "political parties," upon questions entirely unimportant, or of so disagreeably mean a character that it is offensive to honorable and enlightened men to discuss them at all, are here frequent, violent, and protracted, just in inverse proportion to the population and extent of the Colony under consideration. In this respect, there is only too much reason to fear that these British North American Colonies are gradually becoming more immoral, politically, and worse. It is presumed that Your Grace must already, as a statesman of the Empire, and from occupying the position of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, have verified by personal knowledge the truth of the deplorable facts referred to within the last few sentences.

There is something in the politics of these Colonies which tends to constantly belittle the views and aspirations of the less intelligent and reflective portion of their inhabitants. Yet there is no ground to doubt that they are loyal and true, and mean well. But they have been entrusted with a constitutional machinery which, elsewhere and until within a recent period, they have seen solemnly applied only to great interests and essentially national questions; whilst they have to adapt it solely to petty, local interests. They estimate the magnitude of the subjects of their factious disputes by their preconceived conceptions of the magnitude of the machinery placed in their hands for settling them. Thus too many of our Colonial politicians make "much ado about nothing," or what is the next thing to nothing; whilst, as a very natural consequence of this, really important matters are lost sight of.

The proposition submitted to the consideration of Your Grace is, that if even the class of these Colonists whom we are now considering had much more important political objects thrust upon them, such as a *quasi* nationality would necessarily impose, legislation and the administration of public affairs throughout British America would become a more serious business, and would be conducted with vastly greater calmness, wisdom, and circumspection. That is an end which it seems possible to attain within a reasonable period of time, only by a Union of all the Colonies. The condition of every one of these Colonies, so far as their internal politics is to be considered, is deplorable, at the present time, and is daily growing worse. We are fast approaching the time when *all* of the talented and enlightened members of the community will abstain from taking any prominent part in our Colonial politics; and when the management of public affairs will wholly fall into the hands of violent factions, led by ignorant and narrow-minded, but cunning men.

There is every reason to believe that a Union and consolidation of the Colonies would, by largely adding to the importance of the subjects of British American legislation and government, and necessarily elevating the position of the British American politician, check this downward tendency and gradually cure the evils just complained of. It seems difficult to conceive any other scheme which would effect that cure.

There are other considerations favorable to the plan proposed with which few persons in British North America, of whatever class, have failed to be impressed. These are, for the most part, of a commercial character. The isolated position which each one of these Colonies occupies relative to the others, furnishes a constant check to their commercial intercourse, and indeed to their commercial enterprise generally. It may be safely alleged as incontrovertible, that this restraint can never be removed—the obstructions to trade which it causes can never be wholly surmounted, except by a complete and absolute consolidation of the Colonies under one Government, having unlimited internal jurisdiction. Considering the near vicinity to each other of the Provinces of Eastern British America, the small amount of their intercolonial trade seems, at the first glance, almost incredible. The causes are, however, easily discerned. One is the geographical obstacles which Nature has placed in the way of a more free intercourse. During winter, or for about six months of the year, Canada, Prince Edward Island, and Eastern New Brunswick, have virtually no communication with the remainder of the Maritime Provinces. Canada is, during that period, cut off from all communication with the sea, except through a foreign country which may, at any moment, be an enemy. The effect of these natural conditions in constantly impeding intercolonial trade is obvious; for where a trade cannot be kept up regularly, it is not reliable and will not flourish at all,—where it must be suspended for one half the year, it will exhibit no very great degree of vigor during the remaining half. The cure for this difficulty is equally obvious. It is the completion of the line of railway from Halifax to Quebec. This work, to which reference will again presently be made, would be one inevitable and immediate result of a political Union of the Provinces, even although left entirely to their own resources for its accomplishment.

A much more serious obstacle in the way of intercolonial trade is found in the fact that *it is* intercolonial—that the Colonies are several instead of being only one. The Provinces having each a legislature of its own, without any superior revising power to ensure uniformity among them in matters where uniformity of legislation is essential to their common interests, there are as many con-

stantly changing tariffs, varieties of currency, and local codes of commercial and other laws, as there are Provinces. It need scarcely be said that these are great impediments to trade between the different sections of British America; and, as a natural consequence of that, the foreign trade of the country, as a whole, is not so vigorous as it would be if commercial intercourse between its various parts was entirely untrammelled. It is difficult to remove these restrictions so long as the Provinces remain separate and mutually independent. Yet, owing mainly to the various hindrances to intercolonial trade already mentioned, that trade is comparatively so inconsiderable that each of these Provinces actually effects very much larger exchanges with the United States than it does with all the other Provinces combined. There may not appear anything very monstrous, or ruinous, in this; but it is certainly not the favorable picture of its commerce which British North America ought to be able to show. It would unquestionably be very much improved upon, were all barriers to commercial intercourse between its various parts removed; and a very large portion—perhaps the largest portion—of the profits of Colonial trade which now find their way into the pockets of United States dealers, might, without resorting to any factitious means to divert them therefrom, be retained by the British Americans themselves; for it happens that these Colonies are so circumstanced, with regard to geographical position and resources, as to be each, in a great measure, the complement of the others.

A few illustrations may be mentioned. Upper Canada and the Far West, where the Red River Settlement already forms the nucleus of what will no doubt be, one day, a dense population, seem calculated to be *par excellence* the granary of British America; whilst it seems probable that the Maritime Provinces will always be in a position to receive a large share of the surplus breadstuffs of the West. Canada will be a great timber producing country at a time when Novascotia, Prince Edward Island, and perhaps New Brunswick, will be importers of that article; whilst the immense fertile plains of the Saskatchewan country, being nearly devoid of timber, will, when colonized, always afford a market for that product. Novascotia and New Brunswick, but particularly the former, abound in coal, a substance which is not to be found in Canada at all. The Maritime Provinces and Lower Canada also contain immense deposits of iron—unsurpassed by any in the world—copper, and other mineral substances which are generally found wanting in the country farther west. Again, the great staple export of Novascotia and Newfoundland, is fish, the greater portion of which is sent to the West Indies and South America. With free

commercial intercourse and easy communication throughout British North America, these two Provinces would, much to the advantage of the whole country, become the factors for supplying Canada and the interior country beyond it with West India produce, and Nova-scotia especially would become a British North American emporium for such produce.

The comparative magnitude of the trade of these Colonies with the United States, at the present time, is owing, in a great measure, to the operation of what is called, somewhat inconsistently, "the Reciprocity Treaty." It is not necessary here to give the history of that treaty, or to describe its operation in detail. It has largely increased the activity of trade in the Colonies, and has doubtless been productive of benefit to them; but, in many sections of the Colonies, the opinion prevails that this advantage has still been dearly purchased, whilst the mode in which the treaty was effected is considered objectionable. Since it has been in operation, the principles embodied in it have been more thoroughly and widely canvassed than they ever were before. The treaty itself expires in 1866, when, no doubt, an effort will be made to renew it. If it is renewed, in any form, without the consent of the different Provinces, great discontent will ensue. If sought to be renewed with their consent, they remaining separate as at present, the question will be beset with difficulties. Nearly every Province, and some sections of Provinces, will desire important modifications of the existing treaty in its favor, and each will naturally look *solely* to its own sectional interests. This being the case, and the contracting parties being far removed from, and, in a measure, independent of each other, it is to be feared that much difficulty, delay, and perhaps total failure in settling the matter satisfactorily, will be the result. Did the ratification of the treaty, however, depend upon the action of a single Parliament—that of the *United Provinces*—although sectional interests might clash, the whole body would yet feel *then* that they had interests in common superior to those of a local character; and the representatives of conflicting claims, being brought face to face, a spirit of mutual accommodation would be evolved which would, in all probability, lead to an early and generally satisfactory settlement. The same rules which would apply in this case, would apply in any other where the now unconnected Colonies were called upon to settle any question where several, or all, of them were interested.

If we regard this question only as one in which the interests of the British Empire, as a whole, are to be considered, it is submitted to Your Grace whether the arguments adducible in favor of the proposed Union are not amply sufficient to make it a matter of great

importance that it should be effected at the earliest possible moment. It is well to remember that these Colonies are not in the safest of neighborhoods. Twice has the adjoining Republic made an attempt to seize upon them. More than once within the memory of many persons still living, it seemed not very improbable that their fate would be an amalgamation with the United States. At the present time, we can see nothing in the aspect of British American affairs which seems to indicate such a result. Still, as the Colonies are dissatisfied with their present insignificant rank, it is uncertain what the future may bring forth; and this appears more uncertain when we recollect that some of the greatest and most startling political changes which have taken place in the world, of late years, particularly in some other parts of the British Empire, have been wholly unexpected. But, although the Colonies, as a whole, seem not likely ever to amalgamate with the United States, that Republic may make serious encroachments upon their territory and do much damage to their interests, in the event of hostilities breaking out between it and Great Britain, whilst these Colonies remain still disunited. A like result might be anticipated in the event of Britain being at war with any other great power which could muster a considerable force in North America; for the disconnected condition of the Colonies renders them incapable of doing very much in their own defence. It will not probably be contradicted that any such injury to them would be an injury to the Mother Country.

Many indications have been observable, of late years, of a disposition on the part of the Imperial Government to throw the North American Colonies, in a great measure, upon their own resources, for their own defence against foreign aggression. The principle of insisting upon their bearing a large portion, or even the whole, of the burden of their own defences, is one to which no one could reasonably object, provided that those Colonies were first placed in a position which would enable them to act with vigor and unanimity; otherwise it would impose upon them great hardship, if not injustice. Were they now to be thus thrown upon their own resources, they would be exposed to great dangers. Each Province would naturally measure only its own resources against those of the real, or suspected, enemy; and the calculation would have a disheartening effect, which would prevent that Province putting forth efforts even to the extent of its own ability. Such force as they could raise collectively would be of comparatively little service; for they would be under no single direction, and in all that related to the raising, equipment, and management of such a force, the various Colonies would, sometimes unintentionally, at other times through local jealousy, or sectional selfishness, be almost incessant-

ly thwarting each other, just as they are now doing, every year, in their legislation upon matters in which they have a common interest. Were the Colonies consolidated under a single Government, they would, there is no reason to doubt, cheerfully accept, as a natural consequence of their being united, the obligation of protecting themselves. They would feel, too, in that case, their own real strength, and would not, under any circumstances, shrink despairingly from the duties thus imposed on them. As a single Commonwealth, they would very soon be in a position to assume the whole charge of their own defence, or to contribute to the defences of the whole Empire to an extent equivalent to that. Great Britain would thus be relieved of a great burden, and British North America would be to her a right arm of strength instead of, as at present, a cause of weakness.

One inevitable result of the proposed Union would be the immediate connection of Novascotia, New Brunswick, and Canada by railroad. The completion of a work which would enable the British Government to transport troops and munitions of war from Halifax to the St. Clair River in three days' time, or which would enable them to be conveyed, when the lakes are free from ice, to the very heart of the continent, in one week, would be of incalculable advantage to the British nation in the event of a war with the United States. Its construction, and the Union of these Provinces into one compact whole, would go far towards preventing such a war ever taking place.

But our expectations need not be limited to the Halifax and Quebec Railway as the only work of great national importance which would result from this Union. There can be no doubt that the great *impetus* given to British American national enterprise by the act of Union would speedily lead to the completion of a continuous railway line from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Many circumstances point to such a result. The only practicable railway route across the continent is said, and generally believed, to lie wholly within British territory; and in these days of rapid movement, the public which travels and trades between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of America, will never be content with any slower means of transit than a railway. Like the political Union of the Colonies itself, such a work appears necessary to prevent the great interior country drained by the Saskatchewan and the Red River, and which is not inferior in agricultural capabilities to any other part of the continent, from becoming gradually "Americanized," and ultimately annexed to the United States—an end to which it now seems tending. This railway would be indispensable to British America itself, were the Colonies of the Pacific coast comprised in the projected

Union; and it is believed that all the advocates of that measure hope that they will be comprised in it eventually, if not at the outset. But exclusive of all merely British American wishes and necessities which may be anticipated relative to this Atlantic and Pacific Railway, Great Britain herself has an immense interest in its construction. When it is recollected that the necessity for Great Britain's strengthening her position on the Pacific, and facilitating her communications therewith, is becoming every day more urgent; that with this railway in operation, Vancouver Island could be reached from England in two weeks' time, whilst that transit could not be made in less than two months by any other route that did not lie across some portion of foreign territory, and not in much less than that by any other route whatever; and that this railway line is on the direct and by far the shortest practicable route from England to China, Japan, and the East Indian Archipelago, where British interests are enormously upon the increase—the paramount importance to Great Britain of securing her position in British North America, and procuring the early construction of this great highway, which would insure to her the command of both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, is too obvious to demand argument or illustration in proof.

It appears only reasonable to suppose that an additional inducement to the Imperial Government to favor the consolidation of the North American Colonies under a single Provincial Government, would be found in the fact that the machinery by which the Mother Country rules over and maintains her relations with the Colonies, would be so very much simplified. The toil, care, and expense, of managing the supreme government of, and exercising general supervision over, seven or eight Colonies, each of them legislating for itself independently of the others, must of necessity be much greater than in the case of one Colony, comprising the same territory and population as the seven or eight. The improved relations which, according to this view, would be created between the Government of Great Britain and that of her North American dependencies by the union of the latter with each other, would also extend to the commercial relations between the two. If instead of having as many tariffs and sets of local commercial regulations as there are Colonies, the whole of British North America had but one, and if unrestricted commercial intercourse might be had between all sections of that country, many perplexities which now encumber its commercial intercourse with the United Kingdom, as well as with foreign parts, would be removed, and a more spirited and reliable trade between the two would ensue.

Why, it may be asked, attempt to thrust upon the notice of a

member of the Imperial Government arguments in favor of this Union, when Her Majesty's Government have already evinced a disposition to leave the settlement of the question entirely in the hands of the Colonists themselves? Your Grace will observe that many of the very facts which show the necessity for a Union, are likely to hinder its accomplishment by the Colonists' own unaided efforts, and indicate the desirability of the Mother Country taking a lead in the measure. The narrowing tendency of the present political contests of the Colonies upon the minds of their politicians, has already been alluded to. Your Grace need scarcely be reminded that a large proportion of the class of local and ephemeral politicians everywhere, always favor disunion and disintegration; because in a large sphere their occupation would be gone, and they would be obliged to make way for more enlightened and abler men. It is not improbable that many of this class in British America would oppose the Union, did its accomplishment appear imminent. As also mentioned above, legislation, throughout the Colonies generally, has unfortunately assumed, of late years, a very partizan character. So far is this the case, that in more than one of the Provinces it is extremely difficult to get any measure, however important to the interests of the public as a whole, passed through the legislature, unless it can be made to appear that the measure in question will ensure special substantial benefits to the faction which then happens to be in the ascendancy, or tend to weaken their rivals for political power. The projected Union of the Colonies would not lead to the aggrandizement of any one now organized political party, in any Colony of North America, at the expense of any other party. Hence a reason why a considerable number of the public men of the Colonies might exhibit an indifference, or possibly a hostility, towards the proposed measure. These anticipated objections are, it may as well be confessed, entirely conjectural. The writer does not *know* that any objections would be made, from any Colonial quarter, to this step. He has never once, either in public or private, heard any objection urged to a Union of the Colonies, although the subject has been pretty widely canvassed of late years; whilst he is aware that many of the most prominent statesmen of British North America are its open advocates. Nevertheless, owing to the temper of too large a number of the Colonial politicians, and the character which their discussions too often assume, and to the propensity of petty, local demagogues everywhere to oppose all such changes as this, it is considered not improbable that the Union could not be effected without clamors against it being raised from some quarter: that is, if the accomplishment of the object were left wholly to the action

of the Colonies themselves. On the contrary, were the Mother Country to take the lead in the matter, and invite the co-operation of the various Colonies to effect the change in question, that co-operation would, it is believed, be heartily given. This is indeed mere matter of opinion; but the cheerful compliance with which the Colonies have usually responded to the direct suggestions and invitations of the Imperial Government, leaves no room for doubt that they would readily acquiesce in a suggestion such as this to which no reasonable objection could be made.

There are other difficulties in the way of the Colonies coming together solely by their own act, which are not quite so problematical as those just mentioned. In all of the Colonies party animosities and jealousies are excessive; and there is some reason to fear that if any party, in either of our Legislatures, were, as a party, to move vigorously in favor of the Union, the pure spirit of faction would cause a stout opposition to it from their party opponents. There is ground for suspicion that one great reason why more active and vigorous steps towards that end have not hitherto been taken by any of the many prominent public men who are known to be favorable to its attainment, is that they feared lest their moving in it would evoke the hostility of political rivals, thus causing delay to the success of the project, and possibly its ultimate failure. It is credible that a similar jealousy between the Provinces, as so many individuals, would produce a like result, were any one of them to attempt, in advance of the others, to push this scheme to a consummation. All such difficulties would be at once and easily obviated by the Imperial Government's taking the initiative, and inviting the several Provinces to act simultaneously in arranging the terms of the Union.

Besides the arguments embodied in the foregoing remarks, both in favor of the Union itself and in favor of the Mother Country taking an active part in its consummation, there are others which may be briefly alluded to. The universal affection entertained by her subjects for the person of our gracious Queen, would render this great political change in one section of her Empire a matter of easy consummation *now*. Were her Government to take a leading part in bringing it about, such an act would be regarded by the British American people as one of maternal solicitude for their permanent welfare, and would draw them, if possible, more closely, and certainly attach them more securely to the British throne. Should the settlement of this question be still left to the chances of the future, it is difficult to say what may be the result; but evil, rather than good, may be reasonably anticipated. Should the—in that case difficult—operation of coming together be achieved by the

Colonies themselves, without aid from the Imperial Government, they would probably consider that they had nothing to thank the latter for, and would draw off, wearing towards the Mother Country an independent, defiant air, which slight cause would change into a hostile one. Every hour adds to the pressing necessity for early action in this matter. The local evils, alluded to in the course of these remarks, incident to the political condition of the Lower Provinces, are yearly increasing; whilst in Canada *something must* be done forthwith. The danger of delay is to that Province imminent. If the Lower Provinces are not soon amalgamated with Canada to neutralise the injurious action of the contending powers there, an open rupture between Upper and Lower Canada seems inevitable; and the eventual annexation of the Western section of the Province, as well as the Red River country, to the United States, would be a highly probable result of that separation. At the same time that this opinion is hazarded, it is submitted to Your Grace, however paradoxical such an assertion may seem in this connection, that the degree of success attained by the experiment of the Canadian Union of 1840, proves conclusively the feasibility and ultimate success of a wider measure, which would comprise the whole of British North America. In Canada were found two races in open hostility towards each other, professing antagonistic religious creeds, and widely differing from each other in customs, laws, traditions, and national characteristics. Yet United Canada has, in a career of twenty years, made such a rapid progress in increase of population, wealth, general prosperity,—has attained, we may say, such a degree of grandeur as would have been entirely impossible had it continued, during that period, two distinct Provinces. The seemingly insurmountable difficulties in the way of a longer continuance in operation of its present Constitution, are not owing to the fact that Upper and Lower Canada are united, but result from certain artificial conditions annexed to the Union Act. It seems difficult to conceive how these difficulties can now be got rid of without doing manifest injustice to either one or the other of the two great divisions of Canada, unless by combining them with the other North American Colonies under a single Colonial Government.

This is probably neither the time, nor the occasion, to enter upon any details as to the particular kind of Union that would be most desirable. The writer will only venture to observe, as an individual opinion, that a Federative Constitution similar to that lately accorded by Imperial Act to New Zealand, dividing the whole United Colonies into a number of Provinces, each with an elective Superintendent and Council to administer and legislate upon cer-

tain defined and exclusively local affairs,—the whole being subordinated to a Viceroy, appointed by the Crown, or hereditary in a branch of the Royal Family, and a metropolitan Parliament of two Houses, to deal with all matters of general interest, and to possess the power of exercising a general supervision over the local legislation of the Provinces so as to harmonise their action, would seem to combine the greatest degree of security to local interests with the greatest unanimity upon all matters of importance affecting the whole United Colony. It would also probably satisfy the wishes and aspirations of the greatest number.

In conclusion, the undersigned craves permission to suggest to Your Grace the desirability of making enquiries, so far as leisure and convenience will permit, during the tour of Your Grace through these Colonies, into the state of feeling existing among them relative to the subject of the above remarks, and their expectations as to their future relations, political and commercial, with their powerful neighbors of the United States, with each other, but, still more, with the Mother Country. Should anything in the foregoing observations add to the disposition of Your Grace to listen favorably to this suggestion and act upon it, the object with which they were penned will have been fully attained; for the writer believes that Your Grace will then hold communication upon this subject with many public men who are as profoundly impressed with a sense of the necessity for a Union of the Colonies as he himself *can* be, and who can much more forcibly and convincingly present the arguments which go to prove that necessity.

P. S. HAMILTON,

Halifax, Nova Scotia.

July 28th, 1860.

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